

**Translating Institutional Change - Towards a processual Framework for rule-based Translation**

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# TRANSLATING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE - TOWARDS A PROCESSUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RULE-BASED TRANSLATION

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, scholars of Institutional organization theory have developed a vivid interest in explaining institutional change (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; DiMaggio, 1988; Fligstein, 2008). The focus has thereby been on the central actor, the institutional entrepreneur, who invokes change on the level of the institutional field by employing sufficient resources (DiMaggio, 1988). Traditional neo-institutional theory assumes thereby that ideas are diffused as isomorphic pressures throughout the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and organizations, embedded in these institutions, adopt these pressures as merely passive recipients (Fligstein, 2001, p. 110). This process of institutionalization finally leads to increasing homogeneity across an institutional field.

The premise of increasing homogeneity across the field through the diffusion of institutional pressures and the lack of agency have been challenged by the so-called “Scandinavian Institutionalism”, that proposed a different conception of how ideas spread (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). Inspired by the sociology of translation, put forward by Latour (1986) and Callon (1986), the Nordic institutionalists conceptualize the dissemination of institutional change as an active translation process with local re-creation of the elements drawn from the environment (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996), and directs the attention to the actions and mechanisms that govern this process (Suarez & Bromley, 2016). When “travelling” from one context to another, an idea needs to be de-contextualized and re-contextualized, which involves the process of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996) or editing (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996) to fit the new organizational context. In contrast to the traditional neo-institutional organization scholars, the translation literature employs a processual view that emphasizes the agency and variation in local instantiation of institutional demands (Latour, 1986; Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014).

If consequently accepting the local adaption, the translation process usually leads to new and unique local versions of an idea (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996), which renders the theorizing of field level institutional change difficult (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014). On the other hand, more recent literature proposed that local translation processes seem to follow certain patterns (Kirkpatrick, Bullinger, Lega, & Dent, 2013; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; van Veen, Bezemer, & Karsten, 2011; Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014). There have been efforts to formalize these findings and conciliate both approaches. For example, Røvik (2016) developed an instrumental theory proposing different rules of translation.

While the contributions on rule-based translation have promoted a deeper understanding of local variation across the institutional field, they mainly define external factors to the organization as constituent to the application of a certain rule. Newly arising institutional

demands or ideas, however, are interpreted and enacted by individuals within the organization. These individuals are themselves embedded in certain social structures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), which will influence how they perceive the field level idea, interpret it and select the mode of translation accordingly. This influence of individual perception in rule-based translation has been underdeveloped so far.

This article contributes to the further theorizing of rule-based translation by analyzing, how the individual interpretation influences the translation process and hence, translation pattern. As they are mobilized along the implementation process, it is argued that the pre-existing interpretive schemes of individuals will thereby guide the form and the outcome of the translation process (Schedler & Grand, 2016). This allows the construction of a model for the operationalization of the rule-based translation process.

The Article is structured as follows: the next section introduces the ontological underlying of the diffusion and translation perspectives, respectively. This is necessary to lay the ground for the following integration of processual and typological elements. The latter will be explained in the subsequent section presenting the contextual constituents of translation patterns, before the concept of rationality will be introduced as additional, intra-organizational factor for the selection of translation rules. In the final section, a tentative framework for rule-based translation will be sketched out.

## 2 FROM DIFFUSION TO TRANSLATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In the diffusion model, agency is exclusively located at the center and the actors within the field merely act as a passive medium that transmits the institutional change demands mostly unchanged. This renders the field actors as passive recipients of institutional pressures or “cultural dopes” (Fligstein, 2001, p. 110). Diffusion is deemed a viable metaphor to explicate initial constellations for institutional change and account for agency in form of an institutional entrepreneur, but falls short in demonstrating how the change is perceived and adopted throughout the field. Latour (1986) takes up this criticism to the diffusion model, when he argues that “*Diffusion defines three important elements in the spread of a token through time and space: the initial force that triggers the movements and which constitutes its only energy, the inertia that conserves this energy; and the medium through which the token circulates*” (pp. 266-267).

What is more, by focusing on the institutional entrepreneur and neglecting agency to other field level actors, the model of diffusion and isomorphism does not propose an explicit theoretical account for variation across the field. Variation of local enactments is only implicitly accounted for on the level of the individual organization. Yet, theorizing the determinants of variation in the field is essential to identify strategies on how institutional change may be best framed and initiated.

In their studies of power relations, Callon and Latour have introduced the notion of translation to describe processes of other actors’ enrolment (Callon, 1986; Callon & Latour, 1981; Latour, 1986). Czarniawska & Sevón followed Latour’s proposal to replace the physical metaphor of diffusion by the translation and thereby emphasizing the richness of meanings, evoking different associations with both movement and transformation (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996, pp. 6-7) One main virtue of the translation conception is that an active transformation process at the local context of every actor is assumed when the idea travels in time and space or as Latour describes it concisely: “*each of these people may act in many different ways,*

*letting the token drop, or modifying it, or deflecting it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it*" (1986, p. 267). Different interpretations or translations throughout the field become the norm and unmodified transmission the exception that requires explanation. Despite this processual assumption being a central element of Actor-Network-Theory and somewhat conflicting with the institutional emphasis on stability, the notion of translation has inspired an entire stream of literature interested in organizational change, the so-called "Scandinavian Institutionalism" as coined by Czarniawska & Sevón in their seminal book on translating organizational change (1996, p. 3).

Drawing on the metaphor of travelling ideas, Czarniawska & Joerges explain why some ideas become fashionable and are being adopted by organizations in various places about the same time (1996). To be able to travel, an idea needs to be dis-embedded and framed as an abstract object, such as documents, images or PowerPoint slides (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Renemark, 2016). Arriving at other organizations in the field, the idea must be re-embedded into the new local context by materializing and transferring into practice to eventually become institutionalized (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996).

Following the logic of dis-embedding and re-embedding, it seems necessary to ask what determines which ideas become objectified and travel and which stay in local context? The authors draw hereby on fashion, that works at the institutional "fringes" in constant interplay between institutions limiting the variety of new trends; and fashion engaging in constant undermining of the existing order. What constitutes a trend that is widely followed is thereby depending on first, if the idea grasps the *Zeitgeist* of a certain field or to put it differently, is framed as positive input for the actors; and second, if central or leading actors adopt the idea and contextualize it within their context and thereby create legitimating accounts for imitation. These legitimizing accounts may be narratives or enacted practices, observable in the field and generating images of action for localized interpretations of other actors. (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996)

In contrast to the diffusion metaphor, the translation model accounts for heterogeneous local representations of ideas, which are supposed to be the same or similar (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). Translation, if consistently accepting the concept, usually leads to new and unique local versions of an idea (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005), even somewhat unpredictable results (Latour, 1986) and appears as the key heterogeneity-producing social mechanism (Røvik, 2016). In consequence, this multitude of different possible outcomes would render generalizations extremely difficult.

On the other hand, various studies open the possibility that translation processes display more systematic outcomes, so for example in studies of total quality management (van Veen, Bezemer, & Karsten, 2011) or the adoption of reputation management for Norwegian hospitals (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014). The latter article not only shows systematic outcomes, but even suspects the translation process to follow identifiable rules or patterns, a proposition which is supported by other studies as well (Kirkpatrick, Bullinger, Lega, & Dent, 2013; Røvik, 2016; Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). The detection of rule-based translation is of interest for the further theorization as it allows predictions and insights about how translation processes are most likely to be performed and what outcomes are to be expected under certain conditions.

### 3 TRANSLATION PATTERNS AND THEIR DETERMINANTS

Scholars focusing on translation have identified various patterns for translation. In analyzing imitation of successful cases, Sahlin-Andersson, for example, proposed essentially three “editing rules” (1996). First, when imitating organizational forms, field actors “edit” the idea by de-emphasizing or excluding time- and space-bound features of the original context. This enhances the acceptability of a given idea throughout the field, as the local translations face different contextual factors. Second, when depicting or reconstructing accounts of enacted ideas, they are oftentimes presented in a problem-solving logic, focusing on effects from identifiable and therefore replicable activities. Accidental circumstances and aspects that cannot be explained are being removed. A third set of editing rules concerns formulation. Through circulation and their repeated formulation, ideas or concepts acquire labels and a higher to be communicated to relevant actors across the field (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, pp. 226-227)

Sahlin-Andersson’s “editing” rules point to the abstraction of an enacted success case to allow general representations, which can be adopted by other actors in various contexts. However, not all ideas or practices are similar in their characteristics and differ in their ability to be abstracted. In his theory of rule-based translation, Røvik proposed *translatability* as notion to what extent ideas or practices can be de-contextualized and translated into abstract representations without losing essential properties. *Translatability* is thereby conceptualized as a function of complexity, embeddedness and explicitness of the idea (2016, p. 294).

Complexity is expressed in two aspects. First, the interrelation between technology and people. The higher the technical element with straightforward application, the less context-specific and therefore complex is the transition into an abstract object. The second factor that influences complexity according to Røvik is causal ambiguity. To the extent that results of certain practices or concepts are attributable to clear factors, the better is an idea translatable into an abstract concept – or the lower its complexity (2016, p. 294). This second factor is directly pointing at the editing towards logic causal chains proposed by Sahlin-Andersson (1996).

When examining the embeddedness of a certain idea, two main aspects should be considered. On the one side, embeddedness is expressed through the centrality or dispersion of the concept between departments, organizations or networks. The higher the concentration in few places, the easier is the identification and demarcation of its knowledge base. On the other hand, the embeddedness is rooted in the non-migratory nature of ideas, which is higher if the knowledge for the idea enactment is based in various inter-organizational context and are integrated or depend on other practices. (Røvik, 2016)

Explicitness, the last of the translatability-influencing pillars, refers to the implicitness-explicitness dimensions of knowledge (Polanyi, 1958). Explicit knowledge can be systematically verbalized and therefore easily transmitted and reinterpreted. Tacit knowledge, however, denotes a personal or organizational, inarticulate component, that underlies a skillful performance. The higher the degree of implicitness of knowledge for the enactment, the lower its translatability. The explicitness of an idea is partly based on embeddedness and complexity as well, as the facility to verbalize and systematize concepts is depending on its networks of social and technical actors. (Røvik, 2016)

Translation is a performative process that requires de-contextualization and re-contextualization (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). So far, the identified contextual conditions have focused on the de-contextualization of an idea. However, there are further determinants

that influence the process of translation, especially in the process of re-contextualization. Røvik proposes two contextual conditions: the *transformability* of a concept and the *relation between source and target context* (2016, p. 300)

The *transformability* of the transferred token is conceptualized as the freedom of the translator to interpret and change the source context version or create own versions (Røvik, 2016, p. 300). Two components seem important to determine the transformability: first, the more a practice or idea is depending on a clearly defined technological application, the less transformable it is; and second, the more the transfer process is regulated by powerful involved actors (e.g. headquarters, regulating bodies or rating agencies) the smaller the freedom of the recipient to manipulate the token (Björkman, Barner-Rasmussen, & Li, 2004; Røvik, 2016).

Finally, the relation between recipient and source context constitutes the third contextual influence of the translation process. The main variable hereby is *similarity* or the degree to which both context show comparable characteristics. The translated idea or practice does not encounter an organizational void, but rather a context with existing structures, culture and practices. This may require major adaptations of the translated practice to be successfully implemented or, depending on the degree of compatibility with existing practices, lead to resistance in the recipient organization. (Røvik, 2016)

Based on the contextual conditions presented above, Røvik (2016) conceptualizes an instrumental theory of translation rules drawing from the literature of knowledge transfer and translation studies. Depending on the external conditions, translators in the target context may deliberately (or unconsciously) employ certain modification rules to guide the transfer processes. The first option consists in simply *copying* the concept within the target context. This rule is applied when it is the objective to imitate a concept, either because it is perceived as successful (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996) or because of high uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

To successfully translate an idea, it may be necessary to employ an *addition* or *omission* rule to add or leave out certain elements for a better fit in the target context. Ultimately, *alteration* grants the highest degree of in modification of the idea. This rule may be employed to create a local innovation or when the difference between source and target differ strongly. The use of different translation rules, however, does not necessarily raise the degree of heterogeneity across the field. Depending on the local context, different strategies may lead to higher similarity than would the use of the same rule. Almost always, however, does use of copying or imitation promise less variation than other rules (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014).

Table 1 below gives an overview on the different translation modes with the corresponding rules. In addition, the table is complemented with favorable context conditions for each type of translation.

Translation mode	Reproducing	Modifying		Radical
Translation rule	Copying	Addition	Omission	Alteration
Description	Replication of practices or results	Explication of implicit elements from the source context; Combination of existing elements from the recipient context with elements of the source context	Implication or subtraction of certain aspects from the desired source version to the recipient version	Comprehensive transformation of the source version or combining various sources creating a unique recipient
Translatability	high	medium	medium	low
Transformability	low	medium	medium	high
Difference between source and target context	low	medium	medium	high

Table 1 typology of translation modes and context conditions (own figure based on Røvik, 2016)

Ansari, Fiss & Zajac (2010) follow a similar approach for the conceptualization of practice adaption at the interface of population and organization level. Combining rational and institutional accounts for organizational behavior, they argue that diffusing practices are adapted and adopted in varying degrees of fidelity and extensiveness over time and in dependence of fit between idea and organizational context. Whereas fidelity denotes the degree of similarity between field level concept and organizational practice, extensiveness describes the degree of implementation. Especially the degree of implementation adds a new dimension to the translation process, as it turns the question of adaption or non-adaption into a continuum.

In this section, some contextual conditions and translation patterns have been discussed and some light on the determinants for the process of translation has been shed. However, the literature on translation patterns has focused on the field level characteristics of a concept or an idea. Little attention has been paid to the perception of the idea and the corresponding translation patterns at the target context. Since local contexts across an institutional field are different with pre-existing structures and cognition patterns, they are likely to interpret differently.

#### **4 RATIONALITIES AS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED COGNITIVE SCHEMES**

Emerging field level ideas, as well as the available translation modes are interpreted and enacted by individuals and thereby confirmed and reinforced, or adapted and changed in reconstruction processes. There are various streams of literature, that focus on cognitive heuristics for human behavior. Rational choice and especially behavioral economics have become prevalent as theory of human behavior, yet remain asocial conceptions (Thornton, Lounsbury, & Ocasio, 2012). In line with the constructivist tradition of institutional scholars, it is argued here that the environmental interpretation follows an embedded social approach (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). Through social interaction with communities of meaning among emerge shared interpretation patterns. These pre-existing cognitive schemes of a given community of meaning, serve as basis for the interpretation of the institutional environment, and subsequently its changes (Schedler & Grand, 2016, p. 5).

Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm refer to these collective cognitive schemes as *rationalities* (2013, p. 35). The authors describe rationalities of communities of meaning as constructed through a collective socialization process between individuals that are connected through common activities and goals that require communication and interaction. This process leads to a development of common knowledge, values, argumentation patterns and even language. Through a process of institutionalization, rationalities acquire externalized qualities and become taken-for-granted (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and serve as legitimizing scripts for interpretation of the environment, reasoning and action of the members of the community (Schedler, 2003; Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2013). In other words, rationalities serve as socially constructed, pre-existing cognitive patterns, through which the individual interprets the (institutional) environment (Schedler & Grand, 2016).

It is important to emphasize that in this social constructivist notion, rationality is not limited to the widely accepted logical means-end relation in the sense of Diesing's technical rationality archetype (1962). The cognitive patterns of a community of meaning, to which an individual actor belongs, serves, however, as frame of reference for the individual. On the one hand, the rationality acts as filter for interpretation of the environment and delivers scripts for action. On the other hand, individual actions must be justified within the reference group, or the community of meaning, to achieve internal legitimation (Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2013).

Therefore, the notion of rationality proposed here can be qualified as means-end logic relative to a certain community of meaning.

Rationalities are not solid constructs and neither are communities of meaning hermetically sealed. They are constantly reified through interaction of individuals, which are themselves influenced by their environments. As part of the society, communities of meaning are embedded into the institutional order with corresponding logics. Their members may draw on different belief systems as well as new members may enter the group and not only adapt to the established rationality, but also invoke reconfiguration (Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2013). Additionally, powerful stakeholders, e.g. professional associations, may exert influence on the community members through “relational ties” (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011).

The composition of influences, that are exerted on a community of meaning is relevant as the perception of surging new institutional demands, i.e. institutional change, is contingent to the local rationality. It is the communities of meaning that interpret and materialize field level ideas locally if they are compatible with their historically shaped rationalities. If there is no compatibility, the institutional change demands will either be ignored, opposed or reinterpreted (Schedler & Grand, 2016).

However, as rationalities are not stable constructions, the introduction of new institutional inputs may put to play political power games within the communities. Individuals with low power within the group might identify with the surging new ideas and mobilize interests and allies in an attempt invoke open or subversive questioning of the established rationality (Battilana, 2006). What is more, organizations or relevant local enactment spheres in general, host various communities of meaning (Townley, 2002). Hence, what is valid for internal power conflicts is even enhanced across different communities of meaning, since the potential of conflicting rationalities is higher (Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2013).

Pache & Santos (2010) propose a typological framework on the internal dynamics of organizational responses to conflicting institutional demands. Organizations react differently to conflicting institutional pressures depending on the nature of the demand and internal representation of the different demands. The nature of demand asks if the conflicting institutional pressures concern organizational means or ends and therefore allow predictions on the negotiability of the conflict. Whereas conflicts about means are negotiable, disagreements on the organizational objectives are more challenging to resolve. The organizational representation expresses the existence and power balance of the competing institutional pressures inside the organization. These two dimensions combined indicate the employment of the different response strategies *compromise*, *avoidance*, *defiance* or *manipulation* (Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2010). The strategies correspond to the proposed translation rules in the previous section, if the extensiveness of implementation is considered as well.

## 5 MOBILIZING RATIONALITIES FOR RULE-BASED TRANSLATION

In the previous sections the translation rules and their context conditions have been bundled to a typology. Furthermore, the concept of rationality as socially constructed cognitive scheme has been introduced. It is now the objective to combine the contextual with the behavioral factor and conceptualize the mobilization of rationalities in the process of rule-based translation.



So far, what rule is being performed for the translation is on the one hand depending on the degree of necessary adaption to materialize the concept in the local context. It is furthermore influenced by the described contextual conditions – translatability, transformability and relation between source and target context. The judgement about the necessary adaption, however, is contingent to the interpretation of the translating actors. There is more than one way to interpret an idea within a given context (Waldorff, 2013, p. 221). At this point the concept of rationality comes into play again. Individuals mobilize the interpretation schemes constructed by communities of meaning to assign meaning to the idea and its contextual properties. This leads to following tentative propositions on how communities of meaning may interpret ideas and employ translation rules.

The more a newly arising idea is consistent with the pre-existing rationality of the translating actors, the higher is the probability that they will try to imitate that idea in the local contextualization. Depending on the contextual factors, they will employ an adequate strategy to achieve this outcome (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014). The most extreme case hereby is that the concept is so strongly embedded in their taken-for-granted assumptions of the world that the translation happens almost unconsciously. On the other side, the lower the compatibility with local rationalities, the local actors will perceive the need to change the idea and the translation will tend to follow an alteration rule. This proposition holds true under two conditions: that the idea is still perceived as solution to a problem by local actors (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996) or the idea is connected to a coercive pressure that renders not or less extensive implementing difficult (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The statement from Boxenbaum & Strandgaard Pedersen (2009) confirms this argument by indicating: *“to the extent that actors gain awareness of alternative frames of interpretations, they may deliberately try to translate an idea or practice in a manner that aligns with their own interests”* (p. 192).

So far, the translation has been analyzed under the premise that there was a uniform local rationality involved. Yet, as already described, usually exist multiple rationalities inside organizations. These may be competing for a certain mode of translation and lead to political process in the local context. If there is a dominant rationality, the outcome will tend towards the preference of this group (Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2013). The result is more open in the presence of various powerful rationalities. Groups might engage in a process of negotiation or try to enroll allies (Callon, 1986) inside the organization or in form of powerful stakeholders of the organization. Another possible outcome might be organizational paralysis or ultimately split (Pache & Santos, 2010). Stakeholders may independently of internal conflicts promote their interests through relational ties. Depending on their social position, they may be able to influence the local interpretation of the idea at disposition. Finally, individual actors can follow individual interest in a diverging interpretation (Boxenbaum, 2006). In this case, they try to engage in an open or, more likely, subversive confrontation against the dominant or conflicting rationalities to provoke a change in the decision on the translation rule (Battilana, 2006).

Based on these roughly sketched propositions, this research is interested in how the translation process of institutional change is being operationalized within the local context. The underlying assumption is thereby that the translation process reflects the local rationality, since the perception of the environment is filtered through the socially constructed reality. As pointed out, the process becomes more complex, the more diverging rationalities and individual interests are involved. In this case, there is room for agency to invoke new patterns of interpretation.

## 6 OPERATIONALIZING THE FRAMEWORK

The process of materializing a field level idea in the local context is to perform the transition of an abstract idea into a material object or practice. This is a process of collective categorizing according to legitimate categories of a given time/space (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). In other words, the existing communities of meaning pre-define legitimate categories for the materialization of the idea. The employment of a given pattern affects the entire process of translation, as the actors will try to materialize the idea in a more similar or altered manner to fit their expectations of how the idea should be instantiated in the organization (Schedler & Grand, 2016).

It is argued here that the local rationalities not only influence the employment of a given translation pattern, but are being mobilized throughout the entire translation process. To emphasize the influence of rationalities on the operationalization of the translation process, this research complements the theoretical framework in figure 1 below that Czarniawska & Joerges (1996, p. 26) proposed in their early work and has been further institutionalized in repeated empirical use (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Renemark, 2016, p. 5). For the complementation, some elements of Schedler & Grand's (2016) model on managerial mobilization of institutional logics have been considered.

In a first stage the idea arrives at the local context. There are various ways for newly arising field level ideas enter the organizational environment. New organizational practices (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012), new actors entering the field (Voronov, De Clercq, & Hinings, 2013) or new business models (Battilana & Dorado, 2010) may surge and provoke fashions or changes in the institutional field. On the other hand, the impetus for institutional change may come from powerful actors, i.e. state imposing new legislation (Bossard, 2016). These changes may be sufficiently profound, so that all actors inevitably will be affected or they may be introduced in the local context by carriers of institutional change, such as business consultants (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008).

Second, the idea is materialized into objects. Objects hereby refer to any kind of materialization that supports depicting the idea. The process of materialization is performed by the individual actors, that interpret the idea and mobilize their rationalities to influence the translation into a material object. It is in this stage, where the (implicit) decision about the employment of a certain pattern is made, as described in the previous sections.

Third, the materialized idea will be put into practice. If this enactment is repeated, the practice, and with it the idea, will be fourth institutionalized and integrated in the local rationality. However, even during the transfer into practice, political processes may influence the implementation. As there may be various rationalities involved into the translation, proponents of opposing rationalities may try to implement the practice with less fidelity or less extensively (Ansari et al., 2010). De-coupling, opposition or open conflict in this phase is more likely if power relations are in equilibrium (Pache & Santos, 2010).

Finally, the local organization, with its individual actors, is embedded into an institutional environment that offers guiding principles as well as observes the outcome of the translation process - the local enactment of the idea through practice (Schedler & Grand, 2016). The local translation process may contribute to the further travel of a field level idea by thickening its conceptual description or serving as exemplary success case for other actors (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996).

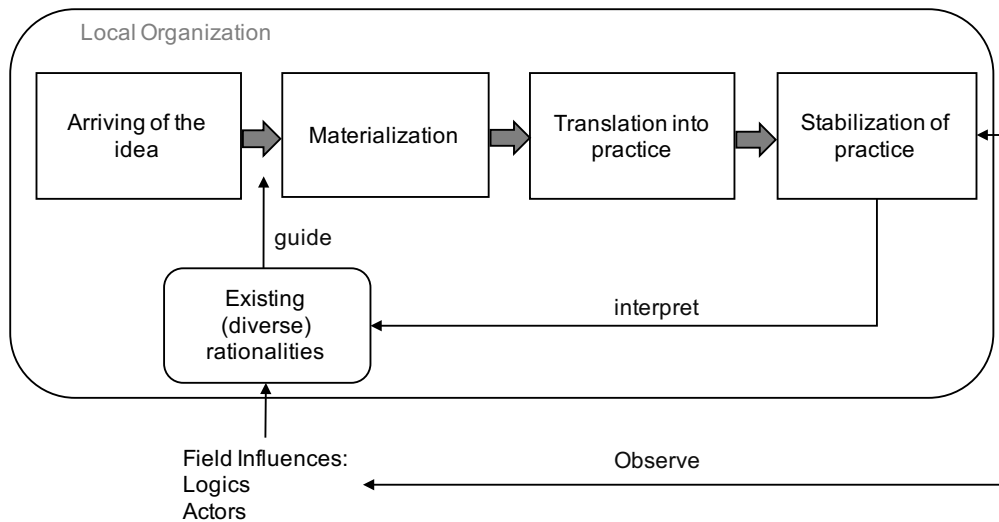


Figure 1 Operationalization of the organizational translation process. (adapted from Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996 and Schedler & Grand, 2016)

## 7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article sought to combine the best of both worlds – structural and processual – to a framework for operationalizing rule-based translation. Special attention has thereby been on behavioral heuristics of individuals and communities of meaning and their mobilization during the translation process. Intra-organizational factors have been under-theorized by the translation literature so far. Herein lies the contribution, the integration of cognitive schemes into the rule-based translation process.

However, this first theorization must remain incomplete. The heuristics that have been presented for the framework are drawn from the social constructivist origins (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012). Especially fields, such as social psychology or collective action may contribute with more comprehensive theoretical accounts to conceptualize the heuristics for translation. In addition, empirical results may confirm or reject the propositions presented in this paper and thereby open opportunities for further inquiry. Finally, besides the theoretical advancement, research on rule-based translation may have positive impact on policy making. A better understanding of how newly arising institutional demands are being translated into local context, may allow better anticipation of these local enactments in the policy design.

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